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A TRANSACTION IN STOCKS

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

RALPH W. TAG

DICK & FITZGERALD
PUBLISHERS
18 Ann Street, New York

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A Transaction in Stocks

A Comedy in One Act

By RALPH W. TAG
Author of Handy Solomon

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NEW YORK
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A Transaction In Stocks

CHARACTERS

MISS ALICE DUBISSON.....*Of the staff of Griswold Sanitarium*
MR. GERALD FARNUM .....*A young lawyer*
MR. PATRICK MCGRATH.....*Attendant at Griswold Sanitarium*
MR. JOHN LANGDON.....*A Mining Promotor*
DR. GRISWOLD.....*Head of the Sanitarium*

TIME.—The present. LOCALITY.—A suburb of New York.

TIME OF PLAYING.—About forty-five minutes.

COSTUMES

MISS DUBISSON—Conventional. Must be very neat and not elaborate.

GERALD FARNUM—Evening dress.

PAT MCGRATH—Blue uniform. Later woman's dress with wig.

JOHN LANGDON—Conventional. He wears grey wig and side-whiskers, carries cane and wears thick eye-glasses.

DR. GRISWOLD—Conventional.

PROPERTIES

Writing pads, pencils, letters, books, etc., on desk. Syphon of carbonated water and jar of powders (sugar) on table L. Day calendar set to 26th, on wall R. Paper (agreement) for LANGDON. Bills, visiting card and watch for FARNUM. Watch for PAT.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience, R. means right hand; L., left hand; C., center of stage; D. R., door at right; D. L., door at left; C. D., center door; UP means toward back of stage; DOWN, toward footlights.

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A Transaction In Stocks

SCENE.—*The office of the Griswold Sanitarium. Early morning. Flat top desk in* C., *liberally covered with papers. Chairs at both sides of desk. Lounge up* R. *Screen* UP L. *Table* DOWN L. *Book-case, filing cabinet, etc. Day calendar set to 26th on wall* R. *Doors at* C. R. *and* L. DISCOVERED DR. GRISWOLD *at desk, absorbed in perusal of letter;* GERALD FARNUM, *in full evening dress, stretched out on lounge, sleeping.* PAT MCGRATH *standing at foot of lounge, hands on hips, looking down at* FARNUM.

PAT. It's a foine lookin' lad he is, Oi'm thinkin', Doctor.

DR. GRISWOLD (*without looking up*). H'm—yes.

PAT. He don't look wan bit loike the gineral run of boozfighters what comes here to be cured, he don't.

DR. G. (*looking up*). Some such thought struck me upon my first sight of him. Still, if he is as confirmed in his addiction to alcohol as his relatives proclaim him to be, he may prove a troublesome patient.

PAT. Go on wid ye. Is he as bad as all that?

DR. G. Yes, indeed. He has an unenviable reputation.

PAT. You don't say. Tell us about him, will you, Doc? (*Goes* DOWN)

DR. G. He was brought here in the small hours of the morning in an automobile, by his uncle and another gentleman. He was in the same unconscious condition in which you see him now and they explained that they were forced to bring him here in that condition, because in his sober moments he does not admit his enslavement to strong drink and refuses to submit to treatment. However, we have his uncle's written permission to keep him here until we successfully treat him.

PAT (*scratching his head*). Well, you'd niver know it to look at him. He looks as peaceable as a captain in the Salvation Army.

DR. G. Yes, he certainly lacks the usual outward signs of

the confirmed alcoholic, but then we must not judge. He may possess one of those freak constitutions which appear to thrive upon debauchery.

PAT. And phwat might his name be?

DR. G. (*consulting paper on desk*). Er—Gerald Farnum—a lawyer with offices in Broad street. (*Consults watch and rises*) Well, I must be off. I am going down to New York. I shall be back this afternoon. When he wakes you may assign him a room, and give him one of those powders. (*Indicates jar on table*) It will help him get on his feet again. (*Goes to* D. L.) Remember, he is to have no freedom whatever and is not to be allowed to communicate with his friends by telephone or letter.

PAT. Oi got you, Doctor. Oi'll kape me eye on him all right, all right. I know how to handle thim birds.

DR. G. Very well, I leave him in your care. [EXIT D. L.

PAT. Sure, you niver can be after telling, just like the doctor says. A foiner lookin' lad Oi niver see and, be dad, if he ain't a regular booz-foighter. Well, you see all koinds in a place loike this. (FARNUM *stirs uneasily on lounge and groans softly*) Oho! Here he comes. I wonder how he'll loike his new home. (FARNUM *stirs again and groans louder*) Well, me foine lad, how does the marnin' after shtroike ye?

FARNUM (*opens his eyes and gazes slowly about without sitting up. Calls weakly*). James.

PAT. Pat's me handle. Pat it is and Oi don't shtand for bein' called James.

FARNUM (*muttering*). What's that? (*Sits up with a great deal of effort and talks very weakly*) What time is it?

PAT. It's noine o'clock, your honor.

FARNUM (*sinking back again on lounge*). Didn't I tell you to get me up at eight?

PAT (*grinning*). Sure you were shlaping so peaceable Oi didn't have the heart to wake you.

FARNUM. Fool! (*Groans*) Oh, how my head aches!

PAT. Well, phwat would you expect it to do?

FARNUM (*sitting up*). Where was I last night?

PAT. Oi'll bite. Where were you?

FARNUM. You insolent pup! I'll—(*He attempts to rise from lounge and for the first time looks fully at* PAT, *then sinks slowly back on lounge and becomes aware that he is dressed in evening clothes. He holds out his arms and surveys first himself and then* PAT *in great bewilderment. He finally groans*) Oh, Lord! (*Covers his face with his hands*)

PAT. Just wakin' up to the fact that you ain't home with James?

FARNUM (*looking up*). Where am I?

PAT. You're in Griswold Sanitarium, me boy.

FARNUM. Sanitarium! (*Aside*) Great Scott, I must have strayed into a lunatic asylum. Am I awake? (*Pinches himself*) Ouch! Yes I'm awake all right. Now where the deuce was I last night! Let me see, (*Passes hand over forehead*) I—I—(*Impatiently*) Oh, I can't think. My mind is a blank and a blurred blank at that. Oh, my poor head. (*To* PAT) Say, how long have I been this way?

PAT. Sure how do Oi know? Oi wasn't with you when you got it.

FARNUM (*aside*). With me when I got it! What does he mean?

PAT. Sure Oi almost forgot to remember the powder. (*Takes a small square of tissue paper, sprinkles some powder on it and hands it to* FARNUM)

FARNUM (*absently*). Thanks. (*He rolls it into cigarette form. To* PAT) Got a match?

PAT (*aside*). Sure did you iver in all your born days see the loike of that? (*To* FARNUM) You don't shmoke that. You eat it—swallow it.

FARNUM. Oh! Well how was I to know? (*Swallows powder.* PAT *hands him drink from syphon on table.* FARNUM *drinks. Makes wry face*) Ugh! Gad! That must be the dark brown taste of the morning after you read about.

PAT. You don't mane to tell me *you* had to read about it?

FARNUM. What the deuce are you driving at anyhow? Let me alone will you. I want to think.

PAT. Go right ahead—if you think you can shtand it. (*Sits at desk*)

FARNUM (*to himself*). Now let me see. I went to the theatre with that fellow Donnelly and he took me to supper afterwards. He ordered a bottle of wine (*Pauses*) and by the way I feel after that bottle, he must have ordered a barrel. (*To* PAT) Say, do you know I'm beginning to suspect I was drunk.

PAT. You don't say so. Well, kape quiet about it and nobody will iver get on.

FARNUM (*continuing to himself*). The next thing I can remember I was standing on the corner of Forty-Second Street and Broadway watching a parade of the Bronx Zoo. Green faced giraffes, two-headed zebras with red, white and blue

tails, six footed bears and a yellow monkey. I remember a pink goat too. Had seven horns and four tails. Must have been mine. Then the parade passed along and the whole side of the street began to move. I asked a cop how long it would be before my club came along. He told me it had passed long ago and I asked him for a transfer. And that's about as much as I can remember. Seems to me though I remember an automobile or something like that. Oh, my head, my poor muddled head. But how did I ever get into this Booby-hatch? (*To* PAT) Say how in Creation did I get here anyway?

PAT. You were brought here by your uncle.

FARNUM (*aside*). My uncle! Now I know I'm crazy—or else he is. I don't know of any uncle within a thousand miles of here. (*To* PAT) There must be some mistake about that. I haven't any uncle in this part of the country.

PAT. Be that as it may.

FARNUM (*aside*). He doesn't believe me. Maybe he's crazy. Of the harmless variety, no doubt, and the uniform is part of his delusion. (*To* PAT) I say, old top, are you a keeper here, or—er—or—are you just here.

PAT. Oi'm the head attendant of this ward, if you plase.

FARNUM. Good! Then maybe you can tell me what I am in for.

PAT. You're in for a pretty rough deal if you don't behave yourself.

FARNUM (*aside*). I always heard they were brutal in these asylums. (*To* PAT) But I say won't I get a chance to prove my sanity?

PAT. Your phwat?

FARNUM. My sanity. I'm not crazy, you know. No crazier than you are—maybe not as much.

PAT. Nobody iver said you were crazy.

FARNUM. They didn't! (*Aside*) Is he kidding me? I suppose he is waiting for me to announce myself as Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte. (*To* PAT) Well, if I'm not crazy why did they bring me here.

PAT. To cure you of boozin'.

FARNUM. Of *what?*

PAT. Boozin' is what Oi said. You heard me, you old rummy.

FARNUM. You infernal wild-eyed Irishman. (*Rises*) If I was myself I'd break you up into little pieces for that. I'll have you understand that I never drink to excess and have

never been drunk in all my life—unless it was last night, and I'll be blowed if I know how I got that way then.

PAT (*waving hand*). Sure just loike the doctor says. He won't admit it wan bit.

FARNUM. Why, the Temperance Union down home nearly elected me President once and I would have had it too if I hadn't owned a Scotch terrier named "Highball."

PAT. Aw, tell it to the doctor.

FARNUM. That suits me. Where is the doctor? Bring him in by all means. (*Paces about and works* R.)

ENTER MISS DUBISSON C. D. *She does not see* FARNUM.

PAT (*jumping up*). Top o' the marnin' to ye, Miss DuBisson.

MISS DUBISSON. Good morning, Patrick. Any mail for me this morning?

PAT (*scanning pile of letters on desk*). Sure here's one, Miss.

MISS DUBISSON. Oh, it's from my aunt. (*Opens letter and reads.* FARNUM *signals to* PAT *who joins him*)

FARNUM (*to* PAT). Pat, what stage is that where you see angels floating about?

PAT (*to audience*). Bedad, the lad's got an eye for the ladies all right, all right.

FARNUM. Who is she?

PAT. She's a teacher in the deaf and dumb ward.

FARNUM. Deaf and dumb ward?

PAT. Sure! She teaches thim to read phwat you say from your lips and to holler with their fingers.

FARNUM. Oh, I see. Well, introduce me, will you? She's a perfect peach.

PAT. Go on wid ye. Do you think the loikes of her would be after shpaking to the loikes of you?

FARNUM (*angrily, seizing* PAT's *lapels*). Look here, Pat, if you say that again there'll be a wake down in your neighborhood and you'll play the star role.

PAT. Well, Oi can't do it anyway. She wouldn't shpake to you if I did give you a knock-down. Why you ought to see phwat she did to an old rummy here last week that was trying to flirt——

FARNUM. You fathead! You needn't tell her I am supposed to be a recruit in the rummy squad.

PAT. Then phwat could Oi tell her?

FARNUM. Oh, any thing but that. Aha! I've got it. Now I know what's the matter with me.

PAT. Phwat's that?

FARNUM (*striking chest*). I'm deaf and dumb.

PAT. The divil you say. (*Smiling*) Well, all right me boy. You're on. Oi'll do it. (MISS DUBISSON *finishes her letter. She sees* FARNUM *and regards him in great surprise*) Ahem—er—er—beggin' your pardon, Miss.

MISS DUBISSON. Yes?

PAT. Oi've got—er that is we've got a new pupil for you.

MISS DUBISSON. Indeed!

FARNUM (*aside to* PAT). Hold on there, Pat. Don't tell her that. I was only joking.

MISS DUBISSON. Is he both deaf and dumb?

PAT. Er—yes, Miss. You see he came here last night—er—er—speechless, you know. His trunk ain't come yet and he ain't got nothin' but thim glad rags.

MISS DUBISSON. I see. And you say he is totally deaf?

PAT. Sure, he's as deaf as they come.

FARNUM (*aside to* PAT). I'll get you for this.

MISS DUBISSON. What a shame! So young and such a fine looking young man too. (FARNUM *swells with pride*)

PAT. Sure, Oi can't see anything foine lookin' about him. (FARNUM *glares at him*)

MISS DUBISSON. Which of the sign languages does he use?

PAT (*smiling*). Sure he knows them all. (FARNUM *starts*)

MISS DUBISSON. That is fortunate indeed. (*She makes signs of the deaf and dumb language to* FARNUM *who appears greatly disturbed.* FARNUM *attempts a few signs with his hands but soon gives up in despair and vigorously shakes his head*)

PAT. Er—Oi was wrong, Miss. Oi was thinkin' of somebody else. You see he ain't had time to learn them signs yet. He ain't been this way long. He had a shock a while back——

MISS DUBISSON. Oh, I see. Well, I shall be pleased to begin instruction whenever he is ready. (*Goes to* C. D.)

PAT. All right, Miss. Oi'll write him a letter about it.

MISS DUBISSON (*turning at* C. D.). Oh, by the way, Patrick, an agent of a Mr. Langdon has just been to see me and I have an appointment this morning with Mr. Langdon. If you see a gentleman by that name will you kindly call me? (FARNUM *repeats "Langdon" in a puzzled whisper*)

PAT. Oi'll do that, Miss.

MISS DUBISSON. Very well, thank you. [EXIT C. D.

FARNUM. Well, you're a fine idiot you are.

PAT. Didn't you tell me to do it?

FARNUM. Oh, haven't you any sense of humor?

PAT. Sure Oi have. That's why Oi did it.

FARNUM. Well, I fail to see the joke. Your ideas of humor are rather crude, I should say. Say, what did she say that fellow's name was—the one with whom she has the appointment?

PAT. Lang—a—something or other. Why?

FARNUM. Yes, Langdon that's it? (*To himself*) Langdon—DuBisson. What do they mean to me?

PAT. Phwat's biting you now?

FARNUM. Oh, I don't know. (*Passes hand over forehead*) If I could only get this head of mine working clearly I might tell you. (*Paces* UP *and* DOWN)

PAT. That powder will fix you all right.

FARNUM (*sees calendar on wall*). Say, is that calendar right?

PAT. Sure it is. Are you still thinkin' you're in a bug-house?

FARNUM. No—but somehow or other all these things seem familiar to me. DuBisson, Langdon and the 26th are associated in my mind, but just how I'll be blessed if I know.

PAT. That must have been an awful package you had last noight.

FARNUM (*gazing at calendar*). Let—me—see. What does the 26th mean to me. What am I suppose to do on the 26th? By George, I've got it. The Mining Board meets to-day. (*Turning to* PAT) Don't you see?

PAT. Oh, sure. It's as clear as mud.

FARNUM. Certainly. Clear as mu— No, you saphead, it's as clear as crystal. The Mining Board meets to-day and Langdon is on it. But DuBisson? Great Scott! The missing shares!

PAT. The missing scissors?

FARNUM (*greatly excited*). No—No—No. I said shares, not shears. Stocks, you know. And she has a business appointment with Langdon. Oh, heavens, we must stop that. Pat, do you hear? We must stop that.

PAT. Oh, Oi git you all right, all right. What is it?

FARNUM. I see it all now. It's a carefully laid plot with Langdon at the bottom of it.

PAT (*derisively*). This Langdon guy must be a bad one though.

FARNUM. Listen, you numb-skull, and see if this can

penetrate that master-piece of the sculptor's art which serves you for a head.

PAT (*to audience*). Is he callin' me names?

FARNUM. I am a director of the Winona Mine, a silver mine which has splendid prospects if capably and honestly managed. I and two others control forty-five per cent. of the stock and a rascally clique of flim-flamming financiers headed by Langdon controls a like amount—forty-five per cent. Now the other ten per cent of the stock is on our books in the name of Henry DuBisson, a mining engineer who at one time ran the mine.

PAT (*showing interest*). The divil, you say.

FARNUM. He died five years ago out in British Colombia but was survived by a daughter, who undoubtedly holds the stock. Needless to say both of us have left nothing undone to locate this girl, but neither one of us has succeeded or at least had not succeeded, the last I heard. The girl is, of course, making no effort to hide herself and according to my detectives this has made the search tremendously difficult. Now Langdon wants control of that company and he wants it badly too. With his schemes of over-capitalization and misleading dividends, he stands to make half a million out of it, and—well, Langdon could be hanged for what he'd do for half a million.

PAT. And so could Oi.

FARNUM. And now for the plot. The fellow who took me to the theatre last night pretended to be a Western Millionaire, but he was really Langdon's agent. He tried to argue me into selling my stock and when I refused he persuaded me to accompany him to supper, drugged my food and brought me here. They framed-up a cock and bull story that they calculated would keep me here a few days. In the meantime the board meets. My colleagues are there giving Langdon a quorum, but I am absent giving him control. In other words he won't need the missing shares. He can run the meeting to suit himself.

PAT. Well, phwat do you know about that? Oi don't git the foine points but Oi git the main idea. This Langdon guy is a crook and wants to do you dirty.

FARNUM. Exactly. But here is a part I can't explain. Langdon has an appointment with Miss DuBisson, who is undoubtedly the Miss DuBisson who holds the stock. He made it through an agent this morning. Now how do you account for that?

PAT. Begorra, Oi don't. This is your story.

FARNUM. I think I see the explanation of it. I know that Langdon has recently obtained the services of one of the best detectives in the country and no doubt this detective has just succeeded in locating Miss DuBisson. Can you imagine Langdon's feelings when he finds she is under the same roof with me? (*Laughs*) I wonder whether he will come here and risk meeting me.

PAT. Sure, Oi suppose he figures we don't let our patients wander around loose. The boss told me to pack you away long ago.

FARNUM. Not to-day, Pat, not to-day. This is my busy day. Fate has smiled upon me and far be it from me not to take advantage of her favor. I must see Miss DuBisson at once.

PAT. But you can't talk to her. (*Strikes chest in imitation of* FARNUM) You're deaf and dumb.

FARNUM. So I am, hang it all. And if I tell her the truth now, it will destroy any little confidence she may have in me and she will refuse to treat with me. How long have I got to work? When does the next train arrive from New York? Langdon is sure to be on it.

PAT (*looking at watch*). In about twinty minutes.

FARNUM. What! In twenty minutes? And you sit there doing nothing?

PAT. Sure, phwat can Oi do?

FARNUM. I'll tell you. Is there a costumer nearby?

PAT. You mean where you git suits for the masquerade?

FARNUM. Yes, that's it.

PAT. Sure. There's one right down the line next to Duffy's cafe.

FARNUM. Well, you rush down there as fast as you can move and have them fit you out as a lady.

PAT. Me? A lady?

FARNUM. Yes. Don't you see when Langdon calls you are Miss DuBisson and you refuse to sell your stock at any price.

PAT. Bedad, it's the divil of a lookin' girl Oi'll make, Oi'm a thinkin'.

FARNUM. Oh, don't worry about that, you'll do all right. Langdon is near-sighted and he won't be able to tell you from Lillian Russell. (*Hands him bill*) Here, take this money and *fly*.

PAT. Well Oi'll do it to help you out, but Oi won't be reshponsible wan bit.

FARNUM. Oh, go on. Hurry now and don't fall into Duffy's.

(*Pushes* PAT *out of* D. L. EXIT PAT) Now I must see Miss DuBisson and put myself straight with her. But how? I'd hate to get in bad with her. (*Smiles*) Gad, isn't she a peach though?

ENTER MISS DUBISSON C. D.

MISS DUBISSON. I wonder if I left my manual here. (*Searches around desk*)

FARNUM (*to audience*). Ah, there she is. Luck is with me again. Now how the deuce am I going to begin?

MISS DUBISSON. Ah, I see my new pupil is still here. I must find out more about him. I wonder who he is.

FARNUM (*to audience*). That's my cue. (*Takes card from pocket and bowing formally, hands it to* MISS DUBISSON)

NOTE.—During the following scene all lines, except "asides" are written. MISS DUBISSON reads aloud as she writes and then hands papers to FARNUM who reads silently. MISS DUBISSON also reads aloud FARNUM'S lines each time as he hands her what he has written. Care should be taken not to drag this scene.

MISS DUBISSON (*reading card*). Gerald Farnum, counsellor at law. How funny, a lawyer who can't talk. (FARNUM *sits at desk and writes*) Oh, he is writing to me. (FARNUM *hands paper to* MISS DUBISSON, *who reads aloud*) When may I begin my studies? (*Aside*) He wants to begin at once, poor fellow. How dreadful it must be to be unable to communicate with one's fellow beings, except in writing—and a lawyer too. (*Sits at other side of desk, writes and reads aloud as she writes*) You may begin at once. (*Hands paper to* FARNUM *who reads and smiles thankfully at her. Aside*) Oh, I think he has the loveliest eyes.

FARNUM (*writes*—May I ask your name?)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). May I ask your name? (*Aside*) I wonder if he is trying to flirt. No, it is natural that he should want to know my name and he doesn't look like a flirt. (*Writes*) My name is Alice DuBisson.

FARNUM (*raising eyebrows in feigned surprise. Writes*—Your name is very familiar)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). Your name is very familiar. (*Aside*) Yes, I believe he is trying to flirt. I must not let it go further. He certainly has dandy eyes, and such a cute mouth, quite kissable.

FARNUM (*stirs uneasily. Aside*). I wonder if I am blushing.

MISS DUBISSON (*writes*). DuBisson is an odd name. Where have you heard it before? (*Aside*) There, that will stump him. He'll have quite a time thinking up where he heard my name before.

FARNUM (*writes*—I knew of a Western man by that name)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). I knew of a Western man by that name. (*Aside*) I wonder if that was a chance shot or whether he really knew father. I know what I'll do. Father was a mining engineer, so to catch him I'll ask him if the man he knew was a doctor. (*Writes*) Was he a doctor?

FARNUM (*writes*—No, he was a mining engineer)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). No, he was a mining engineer. (*Aside*) It looks as if he did know father after all. I must put him to one more test. Our home was in Butte, so I'll ask him—(*She pauses, pencil poised over paper. Writes*) Did he live in San Francisco?

FARNUM (*writes*—No, in Butte, Montana)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). No, in Butte, Montana. (*Aside*) Oh, he did know father. Isn't it strange! (*Writes*) That was my father. (*Aside*) Now, how could he have known dad?

FARNUM (*writes*—I am glad to meet his daughter. I knew of him through the Winona Mine)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). I am glad to meet his daughter. I knew of him through the Winona Mine. (*Aside*) Through the Winona! That is stranger still. I wonder if he is interested in the Winona.

FARNUM (*writes*—I am a stockholder and a director in the Winona)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). I am a stockholder and a director in the Winona. (*Aside*) Gracious, that's uncanny! He seems to read my thoughts. I hadn't noticed it before.

FARNUM (*writes*—May I ask if you have any stock of that mine?)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). May I ask if you have any stock of that mine? (*Aside*) Can it be that he wants to buy that stock too? (*Writes*) Yes.

FARNUM (*writes*—I'll buy that stock at your own price)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). I'll buy that stock at your own price. (*Aside*) There is something peculiar about this. Why should both these men want to buy that stock? Why, I have never received a cent from it and I thought it was worthless. I wonder why they are both so anxious to get it. I suppose I should have asked more for it. Well, it's too late now.

(FARNUM *grips table*) I signed a contract with that man this morning and Mr. Langdon will be here soon to close the deal.

FARNUM (*aside*). Damn!

MISS DUBISSON (*writes*). I have already sold my stock.

FARNUM (*after reading paper, jumps up. Aside*). Can you beat that for luck? Oh, for a good loud holler!

MISS DUBISSON (*aside*). He seems awfully put out about it. I'm sorry I can't sell those old stocks to him. I've taken quite a fancy to him. (FARNUM *smiles at this*) If he wasn't deaf and dumb what a splendid husband he would make. Well, I think I shall have to get his mind away from those stocks. I'll change the topics.

FARNUM (*aside*). Unlucky in business, but how's that for luck in love? Think I'll propose now.

MISS DUBISSON (*writes*). This was to have been a lesson in sign languages. (*Rises and hands paper to* FARNUM)

FARNUM (*returning to desk, writes*—How do you say I love you?)

MISS DUBISSON (*reads*). How do you say I love you? (*Aside*) What a question! (*Suddenly turns to desk and writes*) You don't say that with your fingers. You say it with your arms. (*Hands paper to* FARNUM *who reads it and makes a move toward her, but she eludes him.* EXIT *laughingly* C. D.)

FARNUM (*following her to* C. D.). Isn't she a corker? By George, there's no doubt about it, this is my lucky day. I'll beat Langdon to that stock yet.

ENTER PAT D. L., *in woman's costume and wig. He saunters* C., *attempts a courtesy, stumbles and falls in a heap.*

FARNUM (*laughing*). Pat, the elephant is a wood-nymph compared to you. If you can't do better than that, you're fired.

PAT (*sitting up*). Sure, go ahead and fire me. You can't make me mad.

FARNUM. Oh, cheer up, you'll soon get the hang of it.

PAT (*rising*). Bedad, that's jist phwat bothers me is the hang of it. Sure the bloody things hang all around you and, begorra, Oi can't tell whether Oi'm comin' or goin'.

FARNUM (*laughs*). That's tough, Pat. But say, you'll have to modulate your voice a bit, you know.

PAT (*in a high falsetto*). How's that?

FARNUM. Rotten! Cut that.

PAT. Well, that's the best Oi can do.

FARNUM. Then you will have to tell him you're a suffragette and ruined your voice hollering Votes for Women.

PAT. Oi'll do that.

FARNUM. Now listen closely, Pat. She has already signed an agreement to sell her stock to Langdon and he is coming to close the deal. Now you tell him you have seen your lawyer and have been advised not to sell. Bluff him out of it if you can, you know.

PAT. Sure Oi got you. But phwat do you suppose the boss will say when he hears of me playing masquerade.

FARNUM. Oh, I'll fix that all right, Pat.

PAT. Well, if anybody was to tell me Oi'd do this for them, Oi'd bouce me fist off his dome, Oi would.

FARNUM. You have gone too far to back out now, Pat. (*Footsteps are heard of stage*) Hush, here he is now I'll wager. Quick now, pull yourself together. I'll vanish. (*Goes behind screen*) Remember now, Pat, you wouldn't sell that stock to your own brother for less than a million.

PAT. Righto. (*Sits at table*)

ENTER LANGDON, D. L. *He gazes cautiously about, sees* PAT *and starts.*

LANGDON. Ahem—My good girl, can you tell me how I can see Miss DuBisson?

PAT. Oi can.

LANGDON (*after pause*). Well then, how can I?

PAT. Take a look.

LANGDON. Eh!

PAT. Oi said take a look.

LANGDON (*aside*). Great Scott, can it be that that young washerwoman is the girl? (*To* PAT) Do I understand you to say you are Miss DuBisson?

PAT. You do.

LANGDON (*aside*). How extraordinary! (*To* PAT) Well, I am Mr. Langdon. I came about——

PAT. Oh, Oi know you alright.

LANGDON. Well then, my dear Miss DuBisson, let us get down to business at once.

PAT. You said a page full, turn over.

LANGDON. What's that? Ah—er—may I—er—ask if we are—er—safe from interruption?

PAT. Sure, you're as safe as you would be on a battlefield.

LANGDON. Eh! (*Aside*) Dashed if I can follow her. (*To* PAT) There is no danger then of any of the patients intruding?

PAT. Not wan bit. Oi just locked them all up for the day.

LANGDON. Very good. Very good indeed. Then we shall dispense with any further parleying and close the deal at once.

FARNUM (*from behind screen*). Look out now, Pat.

LANGDON. I suppose, my dear Miss DuBisson, you keep your stock in a safe deposit vault?

PAT. Look here now, young feller, don't you call me your dear 'cause Oi ain't used to no such talk——

LANGDON. Of course, how careless of me. Well then, Miss DuBisson, may I inquire where you keep your stock?

PAT (*feigning shyness*). Oh, Oi couldn't tell that to a gentleman.

LANGDON. You couldn't? Why not?

PAT. Well you see Oi'm in the habit of carrying all me valuables around with me and——

LANGDON (*aside*). Great Heavens! Maybe that accounts for her shape. (*To* PAT) Well, of course, my dear—er—that is, Miss DuBisson, that is a detail we can arrange later. Now we have yet to arrange the trifling matter of the price at which I shall take these over.

PAT. One million will suit me.

LANGDON. One million? Are you crazy?

PAT. Make it a billion, and for that matter while Oi'm at it Oi might as well make it a trillion. Sure if Oi had any education Oi'd raise you higher than that, but bedad, that's the highest Oi know.

LANGDON. What is the meaning of this rambling talk?

PAT. It's all off. That's phwat it means.

FARNUM (*from behind screen. Aside to* PAT). Thata boy, Pat, thata boy.

LANGDON. What are you talking about?

PAT. That's plain enough, ain't it. Oi said it's all off.

LANGDON. Has anyone been tampering with you? What is the reason for this sudden change?

PAT. Me lawyer won't let me sell.

LANGDON. Oh, that is it, is it? He wants his share of the pie. Well, who is he? I'll fix him up.

PAT. What's that to you who he is?

LANGDON. Look here, young lady, I'll have you understand I am not to be trifled with in this matter. I didn't come all the way from New York on a fool's errand.

PAT. Sure, you invited yourself.

LANGDON. That is not the question. You agreed to sell me your stock in the Winona Mining Company and unless you agree to terms within reason I shall take them from you

without paying you a cent. (*Aside*) A little bluff will do it.

PAT (*rising*). You will, will you? Well, I'd loike to see you try any of those shenanigans with me.

FARNUM (*from behind screen, aside to* PAT). Good boy, Pat. Keep it up.

LANGDON. You leave me no other course by this foolhardy procedure.

PAT. Oi don't, heh? Well one more from you loike that and Oi'll knock you so far it will cost you ten cents to send a postal.

LANGDON (*rising*). Don't you dare threaten me with violence, you brazen Amazon.

PAT. Brazen Amityzon is it? Well, bedad, Oi'll show you to call a reshpectable workin' girl names loike that. (*Advances toward* LANGDON *brandishing fists*)

LANGDON. Keep away, I warn you, or I shall be compelled to strike you. (*Raises cane threateningly*)

PAT (*to audience*). Sure, and did you git that? He wants to hit me with that shilaleh. (*To* LANGDON) Begorra, you old fog-eyed turnip, Oi'll show you. (*Makes a pass at* LANGDON, *who backs away*)

LANGDON (*shouting*). Don't you dare, keep away, I tell you! (PAT *follows him and* LANGDON *strikes him with cane.* PAT *staggers slightly from force of blow and is just setting himself for a blow at* LANGDON *when* FARNUM *rushes out from behind screen, seizes* PAT *by shoulders and forces him to floor*)

FARNUM (*in a whisper to* PAT). Lie still, Pat. Don't move, don't breathe. You're dead!

LANGDON (*starting back*). Farnum!

FARNUM (*kneeling at* PAT'S *side*). Yes, Mr. Langdon, just in time to witness the fatal blow.

LANGDON (*in a hoarse whisper*). Fatal! Good God, Farnum, don't say that.

FARNUM. Your blow struck her temple. (*Listening at* PAT'S *heart*) The girl is dead!

LANGDON. Dead? Oh, my God! (*He sinks into chair and sobs aloud*)

FARNUM. Come, Mr. Langdon, this is no time for maudlin sentimentality. (PAT *lifts his head to view the proceedings, but* FARNUM *pushes him back with his foot while facing* LANGDON)

LANGDON. Farnum, you know it was self defense.

FARNUM. I know nothing of the sort. (LANGDON *breaks out sobbing again*) As I came through that door I saw you strike this poor girl with your cane. That is all I know.

LANGDON (*trembling*). But it *was* self defense, Farnum. It was, I tell you, it was.

FARNUM. You could hardly expect a jury to consider a plea of self defense when the victim is a frail little girl like that. (*Points to* PAT, *who shakes with laughter.* FARNUM *silences him with a sidewise kick*)

LANGDON. I tell you, Farnum, she would have killed me. There was murder in her eye. Oh, what can I do, what can I do!

FARNUM. Langdon, if you tell me the truth I may be able to save you from the electric chair.

LANGDON (*in terror*). For God's sake, Farnum, don't say that.

FARNUM. Why not? What is ahead of you? A speedy trial, a speedier conviction, then a lone dark cell and finally some fine morning a trip through a low green door——

LANGDON (*shrieking*). Stop! Stop!

FARNUM. Langdon, tell me why did you come here to see that girl. The truth now!

LANGDON (*whimpering*). Her name is DuBisson, she——

FARNUM. The holder of the missing shares?

LANGDON. Yes.

FARNUM. And she would not sell?

LANGDON. No, no, no. My man saw her this morning and she agreed to sell. I have her signed statement.

FARNUM. Very well. I'll tell you what I will do. You give me that signed statement and I will see that this goes as self defense.

LANGDON. You will? God bless you. (*Pauses*) But no, I won't give up that statement. It isn't fair, Farnum, for you to take advantage of my unfortunate position and rob me of the fruits of my toil.

FARNUM. Your toil? Why, you sharping, thieving—but come —I won't waste words on that now. (*Goes to* D. L. *and takes out watch*) You will hand me that paper in sixty seconds or I call the police.

LANGDON. No, no. Don't do that. (*His gaze wanders from* FARNUM *to the inert form of* PAT. *He starts violently*) All right, I'll give it to you. Here it is. (*Hands paper to* FARNUM, *who pockets it with a smile of triumph*)

FARNUM. Very good. Now it remains for me to get you out of here as quickly as possible.

MISS DUBISSON (*heard calling off stage*). Patrick.

LANGDON. What is that?

FARNUM (*goes to* C. D., *aside*). Great Heavens, if she comes in here now she will spoil it all. (*Returns to* LANGDON) Quick, someone is coming. (*Hustles* LANGDON *off* D. R.) Get in here and don't move till I call you. I will dispose of the corpse for the time being. (EXIT LANGDON. *To* PAT) Come now, get up and get behind that screen.

PAT (*scrambling to his feet*). Will Oi have to be dead again?

FARNUM. I don't know yet. Get in there and keep quiet. (*Pushes* PAT *behind screen*) Just when I thought I had everything fixed! Langdon is sure to find out how we tricked him unless I can get him out of here in a hurry. What shall I do? (*Goes* R.)

ENTER MISS DUBISSON C. D.

MISS DUBISSON (*gazes about*). No one here but my handsome new scholar. I fancied I heard sounds of a struggle coming from here. Must have been one of those awful patients in the alcoholic ward. I hope he is not around here now. (*Walks about looking for a possible hidden intruder*)

FARNUM (*aside*). I've got it. I'm going to try it while my luck holds out. If I can get her to marry me, I'll be as happy as a lark and Langdon can find out as much as he pleases. I'm going to propose this minute. (*Strides boldly over to* MISS DUBISSON. *She turns and their eyes meet.* FARNUM *swallows hard and they stand looking into each other's eyes for a moment. Suddenly*) Say, will you marry me? (MISS DUBISSON *screams and runs to other side of room.* FARNUM *follows her*) There's nothing to be frightened about. I—I—I didn't mean any harm, you know.

MISS DUBISSON. And can you hear too?

FARNUM. Perfectly.

MISS DUBISSON. And to think of all I've said. Oh, you wretch, you—you *villain!* (*Buries face in hands*)

FARNUM. Oh, please don't take it like that, it was only one of Pat's little jokes.

PAT (*from behind screen*). That's right, blame it all on me.

MISS DUBISSON. Don't say another word. Don't speak to me. I—I hate you.

FARNUM. But won't you listen to me? Won't you let me explain?

LANGDON (*sticks head out of* D. R., *and signals to* FARNUM). Pst. Pst.

FARNUM (*aside to* LANGDON). Get back in there. What do you want?

LANGDON (*weakly*). I can't, Farnum, I can't. (FARNUM *goes to* D. L.) I see strange white shapes and I thought I heard a woman's scream just like she must have screamed, although I don't remember.

FARNUM. Just your imagination. Now get back there and stay in there till I call you.

LANGDON (*points to screen, over the top of which* PAT'S *head is seen gazing inquiringly about*). My God, look!

FARNUM. Well, stay in there and you won't see those things. (*Pushes* LANGDON *back and closes the door.* MISS DUBISSON *has seated herself and is crying quietly, her face in her hands* FARNUM *goes to her side*) Let me tell my story before you pass judgment on me, won't you?

MISS DUBISSON. But you had no right to let me say all those things about you. You're—you're mean.

FARNUM. Well, that's some improvement over wretch and villain. (*Seizes her hand*) Listen, girlie, I am here through a queer combination of circumstances and it will take me a long while to tell you all the details, but it won't take me long to tell you that from the moment I first laid eyes on you, less than an hour ago, I knew you and I were meant for each other. You are the girl I've been looking for all these years—ever since I first knew the meaning of the word love. I don't need to know you any more intimately than I do now to realize that you are the only girl in the world for me. I can see it in your eyes. Come, now that a kind Providence has brought us together, surely you won't spoil it all by saying no. Let me hear you say yes.

MISS DUBISSON. No—I won't say yes—I won't, I won't!

FARNUM. But dearie, you, yourself said I would make a fine husband if I could talk. Now let me spend the rest of my days telling you what a fine wife you'll make. (*Places his arm around her*) Ah, go on, marry me, won't you please?

MISS DUBISSON. I won't, I won't. (FARNUM *draws her gently to him*) I won't, I tell you I won't. I—(*She buries her face on* FARNUM'S *shoulder and murmurs*) won't.

FARNUM (*patting her shoulder*). No, of course not, darling. You won't refuse me. (*She clings to him half sobbing*)

PAT (*from behind screen*). Well, can you beat that? If that boy stays here much longer he'll own the place.

LANGDON (*coming out of* D. R.). Farnum, I tell you I can't stand it alone in there. (*Sees* FARNUM *and* MISS DUBISSON *in embrace*) Eh! What's this?

FARNUM. You here again? Didn't I tell you to stay in there?

LANGDON. Don't make me go back there, Farnum. I can't, I can't. (*In a hushed whisper*) She is always at my elbow and I hear a voice saying, you killed Miss DuBisson, you *killed* Miss DuBisson.

MISS DUBISSON. Killed Miss DuBisson? What do you mean? I am Miss DuBisson.

LANGDON. You—you Miss DuBisson?

MISS DUBISSON. That is my name.

FARNUM. Let me explain, darling. This man and myself are both directors in the Winona Mine. He has tried repeatedly to secure control of the Company and by his nefarious schemes run it to rack and ruin and robbed every stockholder in the company. I was able to block his schemes, because I control as much stock as he does. Your stock would give either one of us control, and naturally we have both tried to locate you and buy your stock. Last night, despairing of finding you, he had me neatly drugged and brought here hoping to prevent my presence at the Board meeting to-day. By a peculiar chance he put me under the same roof with you, a fact which his detective discovered this morning.

MISS DUBISSON. That man was a detective?

FARNUM. Yes, a detective hired by Langdon here to trace you. Then, to resume my explanation. I was passed off as deaf and dumb by Pat and I learned of your arrangements with Langdon. I got Pat to impersonate you and we gave Mr. Langdon a little taste of his own methods and succeeded in convincing him he killed you during an altercation which took place when Pat refused to sell the stock. Then Mr. Langdon was kind enough to give me the agreement you signed this morning, and well, that explains all.

MISS DUBISSON. What a strange story! It has been a most peculiar transaction in stocks, but I see everything clearly now.

LANGDON (*who has recovered*). Yes, and so do I. (*To* FARNUM) And as for you, you smart Alec, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in jail in a very few minutes.

FARNUM. Better go slow, Langdon. You haven't much to go on, you know, and besides I imagine some of your friends would be rather amused to learn how easy it is to fool the crafty Langdon.

PAT (*coming out from behind screen*). Yes, and besides you ain't through with me yet.

FARNUM. You will have to be generous, Pat, and call your score settled.

LANGDON. You can't bully me with fear of ridicule or violence. I'll gladly face the ridicule and all just to have the pleasure of seeing this young lady's testimony send you to jail.

FARNUM (*laughs*). You'd better act quickly if you are counting on this little girl's testimony.

LANGDON. Quickly? Why?

FARNUM. Well, you see in this country they don't allow a wife to testify against a husband.

LANGDON. Husband—wife?

FARNUM. Yes. Or rather we will be as soon as I can find a parson.

PAT. Yes, and in the manetime, you flat-faced old mud turtle, you'd better be gettin' along before Oi forget Oi'm a gentleman.

LANGDON (*choking with rage, seizes hat and cane which are proffered him by* FARNUM, *utters a loud* BAH, *stalks to* D. L., *endeavors to speak, but his efforts to articulate end in another loud* BAH. EXITS *hurriedly* D. L.)

FARNUM (*laughingly*). So much for Mr. Langdon. And now, dearie, do you think we could use Pat around the house?

MISS DUBISSON. Indeed we can. He has had such good experience as a girl.

PAT. That Oi have, but Oi go as meself or not at all.

FARNUM. Don't worry about that, Pat. We'll take you just as you are—just plain Pat. Now your first duty will be to run down to the garage and get a car to take us to New York.

PAT. Righto! Oi can take a hint when it comes my way.

[EXIT D. L.

FARNUM (*returning to* MISS DUBISSON). And now, dearie, how was that you say "I love you" in the sign language? (*She throws her arms around him*)

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